A General Summons FROM THE AUTHORITY of TRUTH, UNTO ALL Ecclesiastical Courts AND OFFICERS.

Wherein they may see what *Truth* objecteth against their Practice and Proceedings in Cases of *Conscience*.

BIBL. CANT. ACAD.

By *WILLIAM SMITH.*

And I will punish the World for their Evil, and the Wicked for their Iniquity: and I will cause the Arrogancy of the Proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible, Isa. 13. 11.

London, Printed in the Year, 1668.

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London, Printed in the Year, 1658.

The Epiſtle to the READER.

Reader,

WHere Knowledge is heaped up concerning Truth, and the Truth not obeyed and practiſed, it makes the World like a Wilderneſs, or the height of Babel: for all People are out of order that do not obey and practiſe Truth: And by how much their Knowledge is large, even ſo much the more Confuſion aboundeth; becauſe that Knowledge puffeth up the fleſhly mind with falſe notions and concluſions, and whatſoever Worſhip is ſet up from ſuch a knowledge it only receiveth Life from the Power of Temporal Laws, and all ſuch Worſhips either live or dye as the Law favours them or is againſt them; and ſuch things are gotten up among the apoſtatized Chriſtians, who are gone from the Spirit and Power of God: And ſo Biſhops, Paſtors, Vicars, Curates and People do erre and go aſtray from his wayes like loſt Sheep, as they confeſs. And what is to be expected in ſuch a Worſhip, where the Spirit and Power of God is wanting? And what is to be expected from ſuch Biſhops, Paſtors, Vicars and Curats, as erre and go aſtray from his wayes like loſt ſheep? Do not ſuch erre and go aſtray as walk in their wayes, who walk not in the way of God? And notwithſtanding there is a confeſſion of erring and going aſtray, yet People are driven forward in ſuch wayes by the force of Temporal Laws, and ſo People muſt either erre and go aſtray, or come under the puniſhment of ſuch Laws. Now let the wiſe and moderate Reader conſider, whither ſuch are going, as erre and go aſtray from the way of God? are they not going to the Chambers of Death and Deſtruction? And is there any cauſe why People ſhould be forced, by Temporal Laws, to walk in that way? Oh that it might be ſeriouſly layd to heart! for ſuch as erre and go aſtray like loſt ſheep, have more need to forſake their wayes, than to compel others to walk with them; for Chriſt hath ſheep that hear his voice, and follow him; and thoſe ſheep do not erre and go aſtray from his wayes, but feed in his Paſture, and reſt under his Shadow, and he ſaves them from the Wolf and Beaſts of Prey. And all ſuch as confeſs they erre and go aſtray from his wayes, they muſt turn unto him and follow him who is the Light of the

World, and Way to the Father; and then they will not erre and go aſtray like loſt Sheep, but be gathered into the Fold, and into the Paſture; and there is neither Biſhop, Paſtor, Vicar or Curate that can come into this ſtate, but as they come to the Light with which Chriſt Jeſus enlightens them; for who be from the Light, are in Darkneſs, and that is the cauſe why they erre and go aſtray like loſt Sheep. And can any be true Worſhippers of God, whileſt they erre and go aſtray from his Wayes? And is not God worſhiped in his own way? And yet ſuch as confeſs they erre from his wayes, would force others to worſhip with them, but ſuch are ſeen in the Light, and their end is manifeſt, and many are delivered out of ſuch wayes, and gathered into the way of God, and ſo he is known to be a Spirit, and worſhipped in the Spirit and in the Truth, which is his own way; for his Spirit doth not lead aſtray from his wayes, and they that have received his Spirit and live in it, they live in the Truth; and they that be in the Spirit, Life and Power, the outward Law can neither give Life, nor bring Death upon their Worſhip, becauſe it ſtandeth in the Subſtance which endures for ever.

So Reader, be thou mindful to obey the Light with which Chriſt Jeſus enlightens thee, and that will keep thee from going aſtray like a loſt ſheep; for that which goeth aſtray is a wanderer from the Light, which is the Guide in the way of God, and they that erre and go aſtray are following and worſhipping the Beaſt and falſe Prophet, whoſe habitation is full of Perſecution, by which the Saints and houſhold of Faith are afflicted: But now the Lamb ſits in Judgment, and the Beaſt, and the Whore, and the Falſe Prophet are judged, and their Houſe will fall over their heads, and thoſe that ſit with them, and they will feel the burden off their houſe upon them; and there will be none to take the burden of: Therefore whoever thou art that readeſt, mind that which giveth Underſtanding, that thou mayeſt be a follower and worſhipper of the Lamb, and not of the Beaſt, and the Whore, and Falſe Prophet; for of a Truth, the Lamb and the Saints muſt have the Victory.

W. S.

A Gen-

A General Summons from the Authority of TRUTH, *unto all Eccleſiaſtical Courts and Officers*, &c.

Friends,

YOU have taken upon you a Work of great concernment, but how you are qualified and fitted for it, is the thing to be conſidered; for there are ſeveral Objections may ariſe againſt you, and this is not the leaſt; Whether you be in ſuch a Spiritual capacity, as to judge of Spiritual matters, or fully to determine caſes of Conſcience, from a ſpiritual diſcerning and underſtanding? for many are unſatisfied concerning the proceedings in ſuch caſes, and it is not without ſome ground, when your practice and proceedings in ſuch caſes are truly examin'd and rightly compared, with the practice and proceedings of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, who had power and authority, in the true Spirit, to try and judge of all things pertaining to the Conſcience; and though you pretend the ſame thing, and have given your ſelves the title of *Spiritual Men*, and your Courts *Spiritual Courts*, and ſo ſit to try and judge of things pertaining to the Conſcience, yet you are not found upon the true Judgment Seat, neither do your proceedings in ſuch caſes, run in a true Line of Spiritual Men before you. So that the precept of the Spirit, nor the preſident of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, are not your Rule; for where did they ſet up Courts to try and judge in ſuch caſes? And who did they ſummon to appear before them? and who did they Excommunicate for not Hearing their Service, or for not appearing to their Summons, or for not Baptizing their Children, or for not Receiving the holy Communion, or for not Repairing Steeple-houſes, which you call *Churches*, or for not paying Tythes? and who did they Impriſon or cauſe to be caſt into Priſon, when they had Excommunicated them? Com-

pare

pare your practice and proceedings with theirs, and then see if there be not good cause to Object against your practice and proceedings in such cases: For you have set up Courts, and Proceedings which are not to be found in the Scriptures. And your first work is to enquire of the Town-Officers (who are your Intelligencers) if there be any people within their Parishes, that do not go to their Parish-Church, and hear Divine Service; and if there be any such, then they must present their Names and Dwellings into the Court; and then your next work is, to send a *Paritor* with a *Summons* from the Authority of your Court, unto such parties so presented, and to require them to appear before you; and when many have simply appeared according to your *Summons*, you commonly ask them, *If they go to their Parish-Church, and hear Divine Service?* or something to that purpose. And though they give you an Answer according to the Scriptures of Truth, you will not be satisfied with it, but except they will conform to what you would have them, you proceed to *Excommunication*, and so return it to the *Temporal Power*, to cast them into Prison: and if they do not appear to your *Summons*, you also proceed in like manner, and so you make the Magistrates your Servants, and the Sheriffs your Bailiffs: For upon the return of your *Excommunication* to the Magistrates, they direct their Writ to the Sheriffs, and the Sheriffs arrest the partie or parties by their Warrant, and so cast them into prison, and keep them in prison upon your account; and here you are the cause of laying heavy burdens upon some mens shoulders, for you address your selves to the Magistrates, and procure their Writ, and they issuing forth their Writ to the Sheriffs, in answer to your minds, the Sheriffs are thereby forced unto Execution, though they well know, that such upon whom the Writ is to be Executed, do not at all deserve such corporal punishment as Imprisonment; for as to People in Corporations, they well know one another, as being Neighbours together; and for Sheriffs of Corporations to be forced to execute a Writ upon their Neighbours, which unto them are well known to be honest and well-disposed men, and such as are of good report, and also serviceable in their places and callings, doth not this bring a burden upon their Consciences in so doing? and yet being compelled and forced to it, they do not see how to avoid it, as wanting strength to gainsay it, and by

by that means, there are many of them brought to do such things, in such cases, as are against their own Consciences, and thereby draw burdens and trouble upon their Consciences; And is not this a heavy state which you plunge People into by your proceedings, as to cause them to do that which is against their Conscience, and so bring them into trouble of Conscience? And there may be a question whether any Law in force do bind the Sheriffs to execute a Writ of that nature in such a manner, but that is left to their own examination and finding out. And now are these things either like *Spiritual Men* or Judicious *Temporal Men*? And is this your Church Censure to cast out honest People, and cause them to be Imprisoned because they cannot for Conscience sake conform unto you? do you not believe your selves, that there is good cause to object against your proceedings in such cases, by which honest People are so exposed to sufferings; for you do not only Excommunicate them, and cause them to be cast into Prison, but you also judge them unworthy of common dealings and society amongst men: And if any have to do with them by way of dealing, or come in their company by way of society, then they must become lyable unto the same Judgment and Censure of your Court: And so your proceedings tend to destroy common dealings and society among Neighbours, which the Law of the Nation taketh care to preserve; for the Law hath great regard unto common dealing and trading, and would not have any man to be discouraged in it, because it is a principal upholder of the Nation, by supplying all outward wants from one hand to another. And you judge and censure this, which the Law of the Nation encourageth, and so your proceedings are found to be against the Law of the Nation, and consequently destructive to the Nation. And are not such proceedings worse than the *Jews* against the young man, whose eyes Christ opened? for they did but cast him out, and all they had against him for so doing, was only because he would not deny him by whom his sight was restored, to own their sayings. And what have you more against those People called *Quakers*, save only that they dare not deny Christ Jesus to own your practice, and yet you proceed further against them, than did the *Jews* against the young man; for you cause them to be cast into prison, and we do not read that the *Jews* did so by him; so you are found in a worse spirit than were the *Jews*, who only cast the young man

man out, and no more; but that will not satisfie you except the body be cast into Prison. And was it not the *Jews* that Crucified the Lord of Life? Now if your Church was a true Church, and your service Divine, then you would seek to gain people by Love, and not proceed against them in such a manner: But your fruit makes your Church and service manifest what they are who persecute honest harmless people, that dare not defile their Consciences with polluted things: and may not people go to the Church and hear Divine Service, except they go to your Steeple-house and hear your matter? And may not people perform Divine Service without they hear what you have to say? for Service standeth in performing, and not only in hearing: for many may hear the true Spirit in its reproof, and yet not obey it to become servants to it: and such are not in Divine Service, though they may hear the Divine Spirit. And may not people meet with the Lord, and hear his Divine Spirit, and perform Divine Service in no other place but where you would appoint them? Would you be limiting the *Holy One*, and keeping people in bondage by your limitations? for if they cannot conform unto you, then you cast them out from you, and so cast them into prison. And is not your limitation the very ground of this Bondage? And is the not-going to your Steeple-house a Fact of so high a nature, as to be Excommunicated and cast into prison for refusing? If it be, then shew the offence against God and his Truth, or otherwise you cast people into prison without shewing any cause, and that is against the Law of the Nation; for no Free-man is to be Imprisoned without cause shewed; and the *Quakers* are Free-men, and you Imprison them by your proceedings without shewing cause, for the cause must be some offence against God and his Truth, and the Offence is to be proved by two or three Witnesses, or otherwise it is not an offence of that nature as to come under Excommunication, and consequently a Prison. And as for the *Quakers*, you have never yet shewed any such cause upon your proceedings, and therefore, as to them, your Excommunications are void, and such falsly Imprisoned who suffer upon that account; forasmuch as you have not at any time proved them offenders against God and his Truth, which is the cause of Excommunication; and they that tryed and judged such cases in the true Spirit, they proceeded to Excommunication upon such cases as were proved

proved to be an offence againſt God, and his Truth, but they did not proceed to impriſon any by the power of temporal Laws, nor by their own power, though ſuch offences were proved againſt them, as might bring them under Excommunication, neither did they proceed againſt thoſe that were without; but if any that was *called a Brother, was a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner*, they were to *put away from among them ſuch wicked perſons* (ſo mark) they were amongſt them againſt whom they proceeded to Excommunication, and thoſe that were without they left to be judged of the Lord, 1 *Cor.* 5. For a man is firſt to be within before he be caſt out, and when he is within, as to profeſſion, and then walketh not according to the Rule of Truth, and will not receive Admonition, to be reformed from his abuſes, then he is to be caſt out as a wicked perſon. So the Apoſtle did not ſay, If any will not come to our Worſhip, and hear our Service, or will not have their Children Baptized, or will not receive the holy Communion, as now commonly uſed, or be in Error in matters of Religion or Doctrine allowed in the Church, or pay not their Tythes, or Tenths; that then they ſhall proceed to caſt out ſuch as wicked perſons: He did not lay theſe things down as a ground for ſuch proceedings, but he took notice of the wickedneſs which was an offence againſt God and his Truth, and ſo laid down the moſt principal matters upon which they were to proceed for the caſting out ſuch offenders from amongſt them; and this was their Practice who judged in the true Spirit, and caſt out offenders by the power of the true Spirit. But you caſt out ſuch as are not offenders in any ſuch matters, and count them unworthy of common dealing and ſociety among men, and cauſe them to be caſt into priſon, by the Temporal Power; and ſo you caſt out ſober, and righteous, and godly people; whereas they caſt out drunkards, and fornicators, and ſuch as were in tranſgreſſion, but they did not Impriſon them; and you are doing both, and that to a people who are neither drunkards, nor fornicators, nor any way offenders againſt God and his Truth, but live ſoberly, and righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world, and you have not any thing further againſt them, but as to things pertaining to their Conſciences, of which you are not able to judge; ſo that if you did not firſt make cauſes you could find none in the *Quakers* to give you any occaſion to proceed in

such a manner againſt them; and beſides they are not of you, but are ſeparated from you, and thoſe cauſes you make are, in themſelves ſo ſlender and weak, as that they cannot any way bear the weight of ſuch proceedings; neither ought you to be judges in the caſe, forasmuch as the cauſe is your own, and the Law of the Nation, excludeth men from being Judges in their own Cauſe; as ſuppoſing that men in their own Cauſe, will eye their own Intereſt more than the common good; and therefore it excludes them from trying or judging in that caſe; and yet you go much further, by taking upon your ſelves the whole matter, as in theſe particulars.

1. *There is no Cauſe but what you make.*
2. *There is no Evidence but your own Concluſions.*
3. *There is not any to give Judgment or Sentence beſides your ſelves.*

Now every Cauſe is to be of that nature, as the Law properly in it ſelf will take hold upon, by which it cometh under the power of the Law to be determined; and every ſuch Cauſe is to be proved by ſuch Evidence as are not related to it, and alſo to be determined by ſuch Judge or Judges as are no way concerned in the matter; and ſo all parties, which may ſtand any way related unto the Cauſe, either in Evidence or Judgment, are excluded. But your Proceedings are wholly left unto your ſelves, and your own Intereſt is involved, which makes you parties; and what plea can be held againſt you in ſuch a caſe, to obtain right from you? For it is to be underſtood, that you have not made ſuch Cauſes, and gotten power to act in ſuch proceedings, as to give judgment againſt that which you have made; or to determine the matter againſt your own Intereſt; and ſo it may well and ſafely be concluded, that you are reſolved in the beginning how the matter ſhall end; and not any plea, though never ſo good and ſound, that will help the Defendant in his Caſe. And here you are beſide the Law of the Nation again, for every good and ſound plea, is to be admitted on the Defendants behalf in all Courts of trial; and the Defendant is to have the benefit of his Plea, ſo far as it will hold good againſt the Plaintiff; and hereby many Plaintiffs are overturned in their Cauſe, and all Judges ſtanding equal in Judgement, as to the Cauſe of both parties, do ſuffer the matter ſo to be tried and proved before them, as that they may from a good underſtanding, do right unto the party grieved. But you will not admit of any Plea, though never

never ſo good and ſound, according to Scripture, which is the chief plea on the Defendants part againſt you, yet you will not admit of it to the Defendants benefit, by doing him right accordingly, but with confidence proceed to Excommunication, if there be not Conformity given; and ſo your proceedings are found to be againſt the Law of the Nation in theſe particulars.

1. *In deſtroying common Dealings, and Society among men.*
2. *In Excommunicating and Impriſoning, without ſhewing ſufficient cauſe.*
3. *In being Judges in your own Cauſe.*
4. *In not admitting the Defendants Plea.*

And as theſe things are the very foundation or ground of your proceedings, and being found to be againſt the Law it ſelf, ſo the Law doth not properly ſtand by you, neither can you properly ſtand by the Law, for the Law doth not properly ſtand by any thing that is againſt it, but rather takes hold upon it to ſuppreſs it; and if this were well minded, you would not be admitted to ſit in the higheſt ſeat of Judgment concerning Spiritual things.

Now you firſt cauſe People to be preſented for not going to their Pariſh Church, and then you proceed to Excommunicate and Exclude them, and no Plea will be admitted by you in the Caſe; And is the firſt an offence in your account, and is not the latter of as high a nature? Surely, if there be an offence in the firſt, it is much greater in the latter, forasmuch as you exclude from that which you cauſe to be preſented as an offence for not going to; and then, if People were willing to go, they are excluded, and being excluded, they may not be received until they have purchaſed your Abſolution, and this maketh an offence on your parts, and that according to your own concluſion. For, if not going be an offence, then excluſion muſt needs be greater; and that falleth upon you as the Actors; and here you draw a guilt upon your ſelves in your own work. And what neceſſity is there for you to caſt out and exclude People for that which they are not in, is not this a high degree of confuſion in your proceedings? For, if you would have People go to your Steeple-houſe and Service, then overcome with Love and convince them by ſound Doctrine, and if you judge them unworthy, then let them alone where they are, and do not run your ſelves into ſuch confuſion, as to caſt ſuch out as are without before, and

then judge them unworthy of coming in, without your Absolution. But if you should do so, then you would lose your gain, after which you seek, and your *Diana* would fall, and your Craft be spoiled; and indeed (to speak plainly) that is the main thing you strive to uphold; for your Courts draw fees from such as cannot withstand you, and your Absolutions bring money from such as fall under you, and so your proceedings end in money; by which it is manifest, that you are not so much for the honour of Almighty God, as the love of Lucre; and if that was not to be obtained, there is good cause to believe, that your Courts would soon dissolve of themselves; but whilest there is any hope of gain or profit, you will keep them up, if the Magistrate will but help you; and you have found out so many devices to compass your gain, besides that device for not coming to your Steeple-houses, and Service, as it is a hard matter to escape your Snares, especially such as be of a tender Conscience; and for the sake of such here are some of your devices opened, and with the Scriptures of Truth compared, by which trial you are found much wanting.

1. You have devised to bring people into your Courts, for not Baptizing their Children, as you call it; and where doth the Scripture command Baptizing of Children after your manner, as to sprinkle water in their Faces, and to sign them with the sign of the Cross, and to have Godfathers and Godmothers to undertake for them? For though Christ in his love and tenderness towards little Children, would have them suffered to come unto him, and not forbidden, and that he took them in his arms, yet we do not read that he sprinkled water in their faces, and signed them with the sign of the Cross, or that they had Godfathers or Godmothers to undertake for them; but he said, *Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*, *Mat.* 19. 14. by which he shewed their Innocency, and his love to them in that state. And now you have gotten a Law to compel people to Baptize their Children, as you commonly use it, though Christ used it not: and if People refuse to use it, then you have a snare for them. And was it not above four hundred years after Christ before sprinkling Infants came in? Read *Eusebius*; And Christ did not mention water when he sent forth his Disciples to Teach and Baptize all Nations, but commanded them, *To Baptize in the Name*, or *into the Name*, *of the Father*, *Son*, *and holy Ghost*, *Mat.*

Mat. 28. 19. And the Apoſtle ſaid, *That by one Spirit they were all Baptized into one Body*, 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. and this is beyond your outward ſign which you are commonly uſing, and it ſtandeth by the Authority of the Spirit, and of the Scriptures, without the help of any Temporal Law. And do you not ſay, the Scriptures are your Rule? and yet you are uſing ſuch things as are not to be found in them, and have a Law to compel or puniſh thoſe that cannot uſe the ſame things with you.

2. You have deviſed to bring People into your Courts, concerning your Communion, as you commonly uſe it, and call it holy; and it is believed that the Communion of the Saints and Apoſtles was as holy as yours; and yet we do not read that they Excommunicated and caſt ſuch into Priſon, as would not be partakers with them. And was not the Communion which they uſed, *the Communion of the Body and Blood of Chriſt*? See 1 *Cor.* 10. 6. And did not the Apoſtle put people upon *the Examination of themſelves before they ate of that Bread, and drunk of that Cup which was their Communion*? 1 Cor. 11. 28. (So mark) He did not ſay, *If there be any that will not receive this Bread, and this Cup, as we commonly uſe it, that then we will Excommunicate them, and caſt them into Priſon.* They did not proceed in ſuch a manner, who had the true Communion amongſt them, but ſaid, *Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.* So ſee what your Communion is, who proceed to puniſh people that cannot receive it as you commonly uſe it; for the Apoſtle bids People *Examine themſelves, and ſo let them eat*; and you bid People either come and eat, or you will proceed to puniſh them; and here is a great difference between your minds and the mind of the Apoſtle.

3. You have deviſed to bring people into your Courts, for Error in matters of Religion, and Doctrine, by you allowed; and do you not believe your ſelves, That the Religion and Doctrine which Chriſt and the Apoſtles allowed, was as ſound and true as yours? And we do not read that they Excommunicated and caſt ſuch into Priſon, who differed from that Religion and Doctrine by them allowed; for the Apoſtle bid people *examine themſelves whether they were in the Faith*; He did not ſay, You are in Error as to the Religion and Doctrine which we allow, and we muſt Excommunicate you, and caſt you into Priſon, and we have a Temporal Law to do it;

it; but he saith, *Examine your selves, whether you be in the Faith: prove your own selves, know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates*, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. And by that Examination and proof, he would bring people to know Christ Jesus in them, and so bring them out of the Reprobate State, in which is the Error: And this was sound Doctrine, by which he laboured to bring people *to the knowledge of the Truth, that they might be saved*; and that was to Christ Jesus *in them*, who is the *Salvation of God*. And so the Apostle would not, *that people should be Reprobate concerning the Faith*, and live in Error, and therefore he preached sound Doctrine to them, that he might open their Understandings to know the Truth; And the Doctrine that he preached was *Christ Jesus in them*. And this was the Religion and Doctrine which the Saints allowed and approved, and they warned such as did receive it, *That they should not receive another Doctrine, though they, or an Angel from Heaven should bring it*. And though they certainly knew, that their Religion and Doctrine was Truth it self, yet we do not read that they Excommunicated and cast such into Prison, as differed from them in Religion and Doctrine, for they were of a better spirit, than to deal with people in such cases, after such a manner. Therefore see what spirit you are of, and first Examine and prove your selves, whether you be in that Religion and Doctrine which they allowed, who had the Spirit of Faith in Christ Jesus: For though you may have a Law in such cases, and by that Law may proceed to Excommunicate and Imprison, yet if such against whom you proceed, be in that Religion and Doctrine, which they allowed who had the true Spirit, they are in the Truth and not in Error; and by such proceedings, you make your selves no less than fighters against God, and his Truth; by which it is manifest that your power is not of God, and so the Error is your own. And the 5th. of *Eliz.* 23. is your great authority in these cases.

4. You have devised to bring People into your Courts for not paying your Tythes; and in that case, *Hen.* 8. and *Edw.* 6. provided something for you; but how that now standeth in force, as to your proceedings, the matter is something questionable. And if Tythes be not yeilded and paid, then according to that Statute made in 2. *Edw.* 6. 13. you are to have a Writ *Excommunicato capiendo*, out of the *Chancery*, against the party, or parties so refu-

sing:

ſing, and if they can be found, then to caſt them into Priſon; and if they cannot be found, then the Statute of the 5th. of *Eliz.* 23. giveth power to levy Fines of 10*l.* the firſt *Capias*, 20. *l.* the ſecond, and *twenty pounds* the third; and if the party or parties do not yield their Bodies to the Sheriff upon Proclamation; then *twenty pounds* upon every *Capias*, *ad infinitum*, according to that Statute. And ſo you are furniſhed with Statutes for your purpoſe in the caſe of Tythes. But are theſe things according to the Rule and Command which Chriſt gave to his Diſciples, when he ſent them forth to preach the Goſpel. Surely you have looked more into the Statutes, than you have done into the Scriptures, for did not Chriſt ſay to his Diſciples, when he ſent them forth, *Freely ye have received, freely give*, *Mat.* 10. 8. And do not you ſay, *Give us Tythes, or we will give you Puniſhment according to the Statutes*? And is not here a great difference between your voices, and the voice of Chriſt? And is not *the true Sheepherd known by his voice?* and are not *Theeves and Robbers known by their voices?* And which of you will go forth and freely give what ye have, as the Diſciples did? Or muſt you not firſt know what the Tythes of ſuch a place will afford you before you go unto it? And will not more Tythes and Profits call you from that place again unto another? And do you not hereby manifeſt that you do not freely receive the Miniſtry as the Diſciples did, and ſo are in the diſobedience unto the Rule and Command of Chriſt, and are minding earthly things, for your Belly, which is your God? Oh the *Luſt of the Fleſh*, and the *Pride of Life* which corrupteth the Earth! The Power of the Lord is manifeſt to cleanſe the Land, and the Earth from ſuch defilements; yea he will ſweep it as with a Beeſom, and will drive the Locuſts before him until the Land be cleanſed. And when *Chriſt offered up himſelf a Sacrifice unto God*, then did he end the Law with Tythes and Offerings: For it is granted, that there was a Commandment under the Law, by which Tythes were payd; and they that were of the ſons of *Levi*, *had a Commandment to take Tythes of their brethren, according to the Law*, Heb. 7. 5. But you are compelling Tythes from ſuch as you caſt out, and do not count them brethren, and ſo you erre from that Commandment under the Law. But it cannot be granted that Tythes are now to be paid by the Power of that Commandment, foraſmuch as Chriſt hath diſannulled it, *Heb.* 7, 18. and being diſ-

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annulled, the force and power of it is taken away; and he never gave commandment afterwards for Tythes to be paid, nor his Apostles neither. And you may see how *Paul laboured with his own hand, that he might not be chargable*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 12. 1 *Thes.* 2. 9. He had not his Paritors about him to send unto such as would not pay him Tythes; and this makes a great difference between you and *Paul*, for he *laboured with his own hands, that he might not be chargable to any*; and you sit at ease, and are chargable to many; for you will have your Tythes, and your pay from such as do not set you on work, neither have need of your work; and as Christ hath disanulled the Commandment going before concerning Tythes, and that he did not revive it again by his own commandment, so it must needs stand disannulled to all intents and purposes whatsoever: For among Temporal Powers, there is that regard to the disanulling of any Law, as that it shall no more be put in Execution without it be again revived, but standeth wholly and fully disannuled and repealed. And will people have less regard to the power of Christ Jesus, than unto Temporal Powers? For as Christ disanulled that commandment, by which Tythes were pay'd under the Law, and did not again revive it by his own command under the Gospel, so it standeth wholly and fully repealed unto this day, and no man hath power to revive it, or cause it to be put in execution; for Christians are to keep the commands of Christ, and not to keep up commands which he hath disannull'd; for that is to keep up the *Jews* practice among Christians, and so deny Christ Jesus, *who is the End of the Law*, not only for *Tythes*, and *Offerings*, and *Oblations*, but also for *Righteousness to them that believe*. And have Kings and Princes of the Earth such Power and Authority as to revive that by their Law and commandment which Christ hath disanulled, and left disanulled? Will you set Kings and Princes of the Earth above Christ Jesus the King of Glory, and Prince of Life? And will you proceed against people to Excommunicate and Imprison them from such a ground and Foundation. Surely it is not altogether your Ignorance but your Interest that puts you forward in this work.

And if you say, that the Church is to be preserved in Discipline and Order by the Magistrates Power, and as they have provided Laws in such cases, so you must put them in execution according to

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their own intention, and that you are blameleſs, as doing nothing but what the Law enjoynes you, which in your places you cannot avoid; and ſo according to your own perſwaſion concerning your proceedings you would ſeemingly clear your ſelves from perſecution: But this Covering will not hide you, though it be the largeſt that can be ſpread over you; and if you would clear your ſelves by it, as not being the conſtitutors of ſuch Laws, then you muſt needs make the Magiſtrates guilty, and you have no cauſe at all to do ſo, ſeeing you reap the Profit; and if you would lay it upon them, to excuſe your ſelves, you requite their pains for you after the worſt manner, for they are your principal Upholders and Supporters, and that breath you live by, as to ſuch things, you draw it from them, and that ſtrength you ſtand by, you receive it from them. And have not you, or ſome before you, propounded and preſcribed ſuch wayes unto them, before they have enacted Laws for ſuch purpoſes? And doth not that make you ſtand originally guilty of the matter? And doth not your proſecuting ſuch Laws draw the guilt more upon you, though, as to what the Magiſtrates do for you in ſuch caſes, they are not clear, and in time they may come to ſee it, and be weary of it? And would you wholly lay your proceedings upon the Magiſtrates Power, and ſo make them bear the burden of all your work? And will that power ſtand by you in all things you practice? or do you not act in many things without their power? and do you not thereby plainly do them wrong?

Now concerning your Steeple-houſe, which you call a Church, and bring People into your Courts, that cannot pay money towards Repairing it, What Law have you in that caſe? And is your Church of that Nature as it muſt be Repaired with money? Will it decay, and fall, and come to nothing, if it be not repaired and upheld with money? If that be the nature of your Church, as by your proceedings ſeemeth; then People have good cauſe to abſent from it, and you have no cauſe at all to compel any to come unto it; for the Church is the Pillar and ground of Truth, and it needeth not to be repaired with money, becauſe it ſtandeth in the eternal Power and Life, which decayeth not; and Chriſt Jeſus is the Head and Ruleth over it, and is a Husband to it. And this is not like an old Houſe that will fall if it be not kept up with money. And that is the Church and Church-Government which the Quakers

kers own and ſubmit unto, and there needs no outward Law to compel them; for the day of his Power hath made them willing, and his Love conſtrains them; and ſo you can neither compel nor reſtrain them by your Laws, for they cannot be compelled to obſerve that which they know is not true, nor reſtrained from that which they know to be true; and whether you proceed againſt them according to your Law, or without Law in ſuch caſes, it is all one unto them; For they do not ſo much take notice of the outward Law in caſes of Conſcience, as they mind to keep their Conſciences void of offence towards God and men. So that your proceedings are little unto them, whether you render them guilty by a Law or without Law. For as their Conſciences are void of offence towards God and men; ſo no man can charge an offence to make them guilty: And that wipeth off all your ſentences and cenſures as faſt as you give them forth. And what Law have you to proceed againſt people for not repairing the fence about the Steeplehouſe-Yard, and for following honeſt labour upon thoſe dayes you call *Holy-dayes?* have you not heaped up devices like a Mountain, and do not every device bring you ſome gain and profit? and is not that the principal ground why you proceed in them, and might their not be a good and ſound plea held and maintained againſt you according to the Scriptures of Truth? and might not all your devices be overturned if ſuch a plea could be admitted? yea ſurely, your mountain might ſoon be thrown down if Juſtice and Equity could but enter; therefore you have no cauſe ſo highly to lift up your horn, ſeeing you ſtand upon a ſlippery place.

But ſome may ſay, *What is there in all theſe things which is of concernment as to Life and Salvation, for Life and Salvation ſtandeth not in ſuch things, but by believing in Chriſt?*

Yes; There is great concernment in theſe things as to Life and Salvation, and they that would come into the true Faith, and be a believer in Chriſt, they muſt deny theſe things, and come out from among them: For they that believe in Chriſt for Life and Salvation, they do not yield their obedience to another Power, becauſe all Believers obey his commands, and not another; ſo here is ſomething of concernment as to Life and Salvation, for who are obſerving ſuch things as Chriſt doth not command, they have not Life and Salvation in him as Believers; therefore people are to mind

mind what they obey, because they become servants unto that thing; and who are obeying any of these things, they are certainly in bondage by them; and doth not that separate from Life and Salvation in Christ Jesus? And unto what do you bring people by your compulsion, do you bring them unto Christ, or into your own observation? And if they cannot bow to your observation, then you excommunicate them, and cast them into Prison: And what command have you for such things according to Scriptures? Let us see your Scriptures if you be spiritual men, and do not presume above what is written, but keep to that which you say is your Rule; for the *Quakers* are noble, and search the Scriptures, and they find that these things you practice are not so according to Scripture. And have not people good cause to be separated from you, who erre from the Scriptures and the Power of God? And how will you stand by these things in the day when you must give account of all your deeds? Will not these deeds appear as evil deeds? and will not you appear as evil-doers? and what Law will then appear to justifie you before the Judge of Heaven and Earth? for you will find him to be a Judge more righteous than your selves; and you will not have a plea to hold against him, but must bear his Judgement, because you have sinned; therefore repent whilst you have time, and learn to do well.

And why do you act so furiously against others by the power of the Law, and take no notice of your selves by the same Law? Is there not a Law for you as well as others? Is there not something which the Law taketh notice of, as to your selves, which properly falleth under the sentence of Excommunication? Doth not the Law take notice of Incontenency, Usury, Simony, and Perjury in the Ecclesiastical Courts, or Idolatry? And doth it not properly relate unto you, and brings such things under Excommunication? See 5 *Eliz.* 23. But you here stand silent, or rather dead as to any motion; and if you say that no such presentment comes before you whereby you may proceed, and that you cannot act in proceedings without some matter for a ground; unto which is answered, That if you would but as diligently search, and examine such things among our selves, as you do other things among poor country people, it is believed that you might find matter sufficient as a ground to set you upon motion; and that is the proper place where you

are to begin, for ſuch things are offences againſt God and his Truth, and the Law very fitly takes notice of them as offences worthy of puniſhment; and the *Quakers* are not againſt the puniſhment of evil-doers: And if you would begin in your own houſe, and make it clean, then clean people would have ſome delight to dwell with you; for they that are waſhed and ſanctified by the Spirit of the Lord, they cannot joyn to any unclean thing; therefore obſerve the Law and its directions as to your ſelves, before you be ſo buſie to execute it upon others: But you rather chooſe to take notice of ſuch things as may increaſe your gain, than of ſuch things as may profit the ſoul. And becauſe of theſe things the Land mourneth and is diſtreſſed; for you have neither precept nor preſident from Chriſt and his Apoſtles for ſuch proceedings; neither can ſuch as follow Chriſt own your practice and proceedings, in ſuch caſes; for it is below a Chriſtians Life, and they that be in the Chriſtians Life, do ſuffer by you that profeſs Chriſtianity out of the Life. And is it not below ſpiritual men to plead Laws and Statutes for their proceedings in caſes of Conſcience? Have you no other Power and Authority in ſuch caſes but what is given you by Laws and Statutes? if you have then ſhew plainly upon what ground your Authority ſtandeth; and if you have no Authority in caſes of Conſcience, but what is given you by Laws and Statutes, do you not thereby take away the Authority and dignity of Chriſt Jeſus? and do you not as much as in you lieth go about to unthrone him from this right? For what Law can reach the Conſcience, but *the Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus?* And what Power is able to Judge the Conſcience, but the *Power of Chriſt Jeſus?* and what Authority can govern the Church and keep it in Diſcipline and Order, but the *Authority of Chriſt Jeſus?* And would you take away his Right, and give it to another, or take it your ſelves? Doth not this manifeſt that you want his Spirit, Power, and Authority; and ſo the Magiſtrates muſt help you by their Power and Authority; and their Laws, in ſome caſes, muſt be the ground of your proceedings, and in other caſes, your own Inventions without Law, and that makes your Excommunications null and void; for the Magiſtrates have not that power given unto them as to what they do for you in ſuch caſes, though you, or ſome before you may have urged them, and drawn them to provide Laws for you,

you, yet they are all dead in themſelves, as wanting power to ſerve unto that end for which they are provided, becauſe the Conſcience is not to come under the power of any man in things pertaining to God; and though we that are called *Quakers* do own Magiſtrates as they are for the puniſhment of evil-doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well; which is their proper place as Magiſtrates, and in ſuch caſes we are actively ſubject to their Power, not only for fear, but for Conſcience ſake, yet wherein they extend their Power to the Conſcience, and thereby would give you power to exerciſe Lordſhip over the Conſcience, we cannot in that place be actively ſubject; becauſe in ſo doing, they give you power to intrude into the Authority of *Chriſt Jeſus*: And as for Conſcience ſake we are actively ſubject to their Power in their right place, ſo for *Conſcience* ſake we cannot be actively ſubject when they ſtretch their power unto ſpiritual things, which is out of their place; and both theſe are for Conſcience ſake unto us, who are cal'd *Quakers*. For as we dare not deny the one for *Conſcience* ſake, we cannot own or ſubmit to the other for Conſcience ſake. And what more is to be expected from us as to active obedience to the Magiſtrates power, but only in caſes which pertaineth to civil things? And have we ever refuſed or denyed obedience to their Power in any ſuch caſe? And as to your proceedings by the Magiſtrates Power, in caſes of Conſcience, it might be ſome ſatisfaction unto many People, if you would openly declare by what Laws and Statutes you maintain your Courts and Proceedings, and in what Kings time they were made: For if you have not the temporal Power to warrant and maintain you, then you only move as Birds in the air, which have no certain Centre, and this is the ground why we that are called *Quakers* deny your practice and proceedings in caſes of Conſcience, as not being warrantable by the Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus, nor according to the Scriptures of Truth: And we know that no temporal Power or Law, can maintain your proceedings againſt the Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus, for it is he alone that hath Power and Authority to rule and govern the Conſcience, and not any beſides him; and ſo in caſes of Conſcience, your proceedings are without Power, and conſequently void in Law; for without Power there is not any offence can be truly tried or puniſhed: And herein you are found wrong doers by your proceedings, and you pull down your own building by pleading

Laws

Laws and Statutes for your proceedings in such cases; and mode-
rate people do see that you are not spiritual as you pretend, but on-
ly in some things have the Magistrates Sword on your side, by which
many become subject more out of fear than for Conscience sake.
And because we cannot for Conscience sake be conformable in such
cases, therefore you proceed against us and inflict punishment up-
on us, and that is contrary to Reason which is counted the root of
the Law: For it is not a reasonable thing that the exercise of our
Consciences should come under your power to be punished, whilest
as to Civil things, we are not found guilty of any offence; and this
we do maintain against you to be a truth: And therefore, as to us,
your proceedings are of no more force, than as you drive them
forward in the strength of your own wills; and yet there is a great
noise that we will not obey the Laws, nor be subject to Govern-
ment, and that we are a willful People, and deserve to suffer. Now
we would have our Accusers to shew us plainly, what Law we dis-
obey, and in what Kings time that Law was made; and also shew
us wherein we are a willful People, and deserve to suffer; for we
do not know any thing by our selves in such matters, neither can
such an accusation lye upon us; for as to all things which the Law
requireth, which in it self is properly Law, we actively obey; and
as to that which in it self is not Law, as not being grounded upon
Reason, which is counted the root of the Law, we passively sub-
mit; and so we stand in the Will of him that hath called us, and
patiently suffer without resisting or revenging, and this hath been
known for these several years; and where is then our disobedi-
ence to the Law, seeing we are either in active or passive obedi-
ence unto all that is counted Law? But such accusations are only
to asperse us, and cover our Persecutors; for we do not disobey
any Law whereby we deserve to suffer, but, as to Civil Govern-
ment, behave our selves, in a just and peaceable manner. And is
there any Law against us, as we live in that Life? If there be, we
would know when it was made, and by whom, and what pu-
nishment is to be inflicted upon such as to live; for if there
be such a Law as provideth punishment for those that live
peacebly, then we are the proper Objects of it, and dare con-
sent to suffer by it; but if there be no such Law, or Punish-
ment provided against a peaceable Life, then do we not suffer un-
deservedly, because our Life is peaceble. And such accusation

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and aſperſions will not clear our Perſecutors, in the day when God ſhall *Judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt*; but they ſhall then know that they have inflicted puniſhment upon us, contrary to our deſerts; and you, amongſt others, who are the greateſt promoters of it, and are alſo in the action by your Excommunications: And we cannot otherwiſe be perſwaded, but you are the Womb in which our Sufferings are principally conceived, and by the Magiſtrates power you have opportunity to bring forth your Birth, and herein you are found to walk contrary to the Law and the Prophets, and to the Doctrine of Chriſt Jeſus; for this is the Law and the Prophets, *That ye would that men ſhould do unto you, even ſo do unto them.* And this is the Doctrine of Chriſt Jeſus, *That if an Enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him drink.* Therefore ſee unto what you are come your ſelves, before you compel others to come unto you; for if you be not come to the Law and the Prophets, you are at a great diſtance from Chriſt Jeſus. And, are you *doing to others, as you would have others to do unto you?* And how do you fulfil the Law and the Prophets, whileſt you are doing that unto others, which you would not have others do unto you? And are you *feeding Enemies, and giving them drink*, according to the Doctrine of Chriſt Jeſus? or are you not doing the contrary, & ſo you are neither come to the Law and the Prophets nor to Chriſt Jeſus. And for what muſt People come unto you, when ye your ſelves are not come to the Law and the Prophets nor to Chriſt Jeſus? Muſt they come unto you as unto *Gentiles, who are alienated from the Life of God, and ſtrangers to the Covenant of Promiſe?* Muſt ſuch as be come to the Law and the Prophets, and to Chriſt Jeſus, return again to the *Gentiles?* for the Law and the Prophets are above the *Gentiles*, and Chriſt Jeſus is above the Law and the Prophets, and ſuch as are come from among the *Gentiles*, and are come to the Law and the Prophets, and to Chriſt Jeſus, they cannot return to the *Gentiles* again, except they deny that which brought them forth, and although there may be ſome that for fear deny their Profeſſion to conform unto your practice, yet there are many that have more regard unto the peace of their Conſcience. And if you would have People return unto you, then ſhew them a more excellent way than [illegible] er in they walk. For ſome have found a more pleaſant [illegible] hen they walked in whileſt they walked with you, and they

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that know what it is to travel in Mire and Clay, and then come to find a Clean and Pleasant Path, they will not willingly go into the Mire and Clay again, but rather rejoyce that they are gotten past it. And we that are called *Quakers*, have learned the Law and the Prophets, and the Doctrine of Christ Jesus, and he is our *Light*, and our *Way*, and our *Guide*, and being come to the excellency of this knowledge, through the mercy of the Lord God towards us, we cannot conform to any *Beggarly Rudiments*, and bring our selves into *Bondage again*. But as the power of the Lord God hath made us free, so in that freedom we wait to be preserved; and as we stand in that freedom, your Bonds are all broken, though you may cast our Bodies into Prison; for you may as easily hold the Wind in your Fist, as hold the Truth in a Prison. And can you hold the wind in your fist, that it shall not have an universal course? is not that a thing beyond your art and skil? And do you think to hold the Truth in Prison because you cast the body there? is not that a thing beyond your power and strength? for Truth will have an universal course, when you have shut the Body close in Prison; and by how much you think to bind it and suppress it, even so much the more doth it grow and spread, and you cannot bind it from the universality of its motion; and so you labour in vain as to what you do against the *Quakers*, and you are so far from fulfilling the Doctrine of Christ Jesus, that in stead of giving food and drink to a hungry and thirsty Enemy, you are so far from fulfilling the Friends, and Friends to all People: and so your practice and proceedings are not only contrary to Reason, which is counted the root of the Nations Law, but contrary to the Law and the Prophets, and to the Doctrine of Christ Jesus, and also contrary to what is manifest to be the Kings mind; for that Speech which was delivered by the Keeper unto the Parliament, upon the tenth day of the eighth month, called *October*, 1667. it was delivered as the Kings mind, and by his Command, as the same Speech doth demonstrate; and what was so delivered, doth clearly manifest that the King doth regard the good of his People, as being so near to interest to himself; and he would have the Parliament to improve it as known truth in the hearts of his Subjects, that there is no distinct interest between the King and his People; but the good one: is the good of both.

Now as the King would have this to be imprinted as a known Truth in the hearts of his Subjects, and that he doth include his own Intereſt with his People, and thereby bringeth the matter ſo near himſelf, as to concern his own good in theirs, which in it ſelf is undeniable a very clear Truth; then why do not you receive this Truth into your hearts, and ſo fulfil the Kings mind? for it is to be underſtood, that all people within the Kings Dominion, who are free born, are accounted his People, as he is chief in outward Government; and ſo in general tearms, he includes his Intereſt and good in theirs, and their Intereſt and Good in his own; and do not you proceed to Excommunicate and Impriſon ſuch People? and do you not make them uncapable of common dealings and ſociety amongſt men? and do you not make them uncapable of having any benefit by the Law as complainants? and do you not judge them unworthy of the Kings Protection? and is not this to make a diſtinction between the King and his People? for no common good, as to outward things, can ariſe to the ſufferers; and as the King concerns his own good in the good of his People, by a joynt Intereſt; do you not wrong the King by intruding upon his Intereſt? Surely the mind of the King, as it is manifeſt, and your proceedings which you practiſe, are at a great diſtance, and much contrary one to the other, for you plainly endeavour to blot out that known Truth which he would have imprinted, foraſmuch as you deſtroy the common good of his People, in which it ſo nearly concerns his own.

And now, upon what Foundation will you have your building to ſtand? and by what will you uphold your work in which you are ſo buſie? for your work is found contrary to the Law of the Nation, and contrary to the Spirit of Truth, and contrary to the Scriptures of Truth, and contrary to Chriſtianity, and contrary to Reaſon, and contrary to the Law and the Prophets, and contrary to the Doctrine of Chriſt Jeſus, and contrary to what is manifeſt to be the Kings mind; and where will you have a Foundation to build your work upon? for as it is found contrary to all theſe weighty things, ſo by their Authority your work in caſes of Conſcience may well be queſtioned, yea, the Law of the Nation may juſtly queſtion you, and the Spirit of Truth may juſtly queſtion you, and the Scriptures of Truth may juſtly queſtion you, and Chriſtianity may juſtly queſ-

stion you, and Reason may justly question you, and the Law and the Prophets may justly question you, and Christ Jesus may justly question you, and the King may justly question you; and what can your Foundation be, but the love of money, which is the root of all evil? And these things are opened thus fully and largly that you might see your selves as in a glass, & others might see you with open face: And what sad effects have ensued the execution of temporal Laws, which have related to Spiritual things; was not such a Law pretended when the Lord of Life was condemned? and was not such Laws pretended when the Martyrs suffered? and are not such Laws now pretended, by which the Innocent and Guiltless are punished? and hath not the prosecuting of such Laws been the occasion of destroying the natural Life of many innocent People at this day? and doth not this fill your hands with blood? and how can you say that you wash your hands in innocency, and so approach to God's Altar, if your hands be full of Blood? And that is the end of your Laws and proceedings in cases of Conscience, for such Laws never brought prosperity in their execution, but alwayes have been destructive, and so brought calamity and misery; and it need not be declared what hath hapned by the execution of such Laws, both as to years past, and the time present, for the blood of many declares it, and the loss of Estate declares it, and the long suffering Bonds and Imprisonment declares it, and the sound of this Declaration is higher and louder than Tongue or Pen can declare; and will not the Lord make inquisition for these things? yea surely, he will find out the work of every one, and the guilty he will by no means clear, therefore love Mercy before you offer Sacrifice, for until you love Mercy, and live in it, all your Sacrifices and Prayers are but as empty shadows; and though you may offer and make many of them, yet whilst you mingle them with violence and oppression, they never reach the Throne of Grace to find acceptation, and so the showrs fall not down upon you with a blessing; and that makes Briars and Thorns spring out of the ground unto persecution: And as for the *Quakers*, you may as easily force the Sun to go backward, as force them into your practice and observation; or you may as easily restrain the showrs from falling, as restrain them from worshipping God in his Spirit; for as they fulfil the mind of God, by yeelding their obedience

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and ſervice unto him, ſo they cannot fulfil or ſatisfie your minds, by yeelding their obedience and ſervice unto you; and if you were ſpiritually minded, you would never endeavour to force and compel them by the power of temporal Laws, but the wrong being greateſt to your ſelves, even ſo they pitty you, as well knowing the terror that will come upon you, and therefore they labour to perſwade you for your own good; and do not count them your enemies, becauſe they tell you the truth in plainneſs, but be warned to forſake the evil of your doings, and live in love and peace as becometh Chriſtians, for Chriſt Jeſus muſt Reign and have the Glory.

THE END.